JUN MOCHIZUKI

THE CASE STUDY OF VANITAS

THE CULPRITS ARE THE CHURCH'S ANTI-VAMPIRE UNIT.

VAMPIRE... DISAPPEAR-ANCES?

THE CHASSEURS.

THREE OF THEM GONE IN ONE WEEK, HMM?

GO? GO WHERE?

...

HUH?

...LET'S GO HUNT UP SOME INFORMATION!

SO...

GU!! (SQUEEZE)

?"

THE CATACOMBS!

JUN MOCHIZUKI
THE CASE STUDY OF
VANITAS
Mémoire 14 Catacombes
WHERE THE DEAD SLEEP

A VAST OSSUARY BUILT INSIDE AN OLD SYSTEM OF QUARRIES.

LES CATACOMBES DE PARIS.

TWENTY METERS UNDERGROUND AND ROUGHLY TWO KILOMETERS IN LENGTH, IT IS SAID TO HOUSE THE EARTHLY REMAINS OF APPROXIMATELY SIX MILLION PEOPLE.

ARRÊTE!
ici L'EMPIRE DE LA MORT.

"THIS IS THE EMPIRE OF THE DEAD!"

"STOP!"

I KNEW THERE WERE CATACOMBS UNDER PARIS, BUT...

...
THAT'S A SHOCK.

...I HAD NO IDEA THEY'D BEEN TURNED INTO A TOURIST ATTRACTION.

THE PASSAGEWAYS WERE THE RESULT OF ENDLESS QUARRYING, CONDUCTED FROM THE AGE OF THE ROMANS UP UNTIL THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

IT IS, ISN'T IT!? THIS OSSUARY IS ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE TUNNELS UNDER PARIS, THOUGH.

I'M NOT SURE HOW TO PUT IT... WHAT A CURIOUS PLACE.

IT TRULY IS A SUBTERRANEAN LABYRINTH! LE MYSTÉRE !!

...BUT EVEN NOW, NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE WHOLE SYSTEM LOOKS LIKE!

AFTER A LARGE CAVE-IN IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, LOUIS THE XVI ORDERED THAT THEY BE MAPPED...

(HA (GASP)

OH!

HE WANTED THEM TO CONTRAST WITH THE CATACOMBS OF ROME, SO ALTHOUGH THEY'D PREVIOUSLY STORED BONES HERE HAPHAZARDLY, HE INCORPORATED ARTISTIC ELEMENTS, AND...!

DID YOU KNOW IT WAS NAPOLEON WHO ORDERED THE CATACOMBS TO BE SET UP THE WAY THEY ARE NOW!?

DWEH !?

ZURU (SLIP)

THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE.

YOU'RE QUITE WELL-INFORMED, MADEMOISELLE RICHE.

IT WAS VERY INTERESTING.

I-

I-

I-

I BEG YOUR PARDON. I LET MYSELF GET CARRIED AWAY!

NO, NO.

WATCH YOUR STEP, PLEASE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Y-YEEEES...!

GASHI (CATCH)

!?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HUH? BEDROOM EYES!? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

LISTEN, RUNT. DON'T GO MAKING BEDROOM EYES AT THE GUY WHO'S GONNA BE MY BIG CUSTOMER!

GW!?

GESHI (KICK)

HEY! UGLY!!

COME-COME, YOU TWO, NO FIGHTING. ♥

AS IF THE HOUSE OF DE SADE WOULD EVER DEAL WITH THE LIKES OF YOU! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND!?

IF THIS WORKS, I'LL HAVE AN IN WITH THE HOUSE OF DE SADE, SO STAY OUTTA MY WAY.

I SAW HIM FIRST!

ARE THERE REALLY CHASSEURS SOMEWHERE IN THIS UNDERGROUND MAZE?

I DUNNO.

VANITAS.

THAT'S PROBABLY WHY DANTE'S LOOKING FOR A SECRET PASSAGE THAT LEADS TO THE CHASSEURS DOWN HERE.

BACK THERE!! I BET THAT'S IT!!

DANTE, NO! STOP THAT!

...AND PEOPLE OFTEN SAY THEY'RE STILL BASED UNDERGROUND.

THAT SAID...WHEN VAMPIRES RAN RAMPANT UNDER PARIS DURING THE WAR, THE CHASSEURS ARE THE ONES WHO WIPED THEM OUT...

OH, DEAR ME, NO.

YOU REALLY CAN'T DO THAT. ♡

IF THE CHASSEURS REALLY ARE THE ONES BEHIND THE DISAPPEARANCES, WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO ASK COUNT ORLOK FOR HELP?

HM?

ONE FALSE STEP, AND...

...THERE COULD EVEN BE ANOTHER WAR.

SURI (NUZZLE)

SURI

TO MODERN HUMANS, BOTH VAMPIRES AND CHASSEURS ARE MERELY BEINGS THAT "DO EXIST, SOMEWHERE, APPARENTLY." HOWEVER...

...ENMITY BETWEEN THE TWO STILL RUNS DEEP.

YOU MEAN... THE COUNT CAN'T MAKE ANY CARELESS MOVES EITHER.

PRECISELY.

PLINK (POKE)

SO, LISTEN, DANTE, I'D REALLY PREFER WE DIDN'T MAKE THIS BIGGER THAN WE CAN HANDLE...

GASHA (CLANK)

SHADDUP!!

I CAN'T STEP DOWN UNTIL I GIVE 'EM AS GOOD AS I GOT!!

HEY! YOU, THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

LEMME IN! HEEEERE !!!

GASHA

GASHA

GASHA

GASHAR

GASHA

GASHA

HEY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING!? LEMME GO!!

COME OVER HERE A MINUTE!

ZURU (DRAG)

ZURU

ZURU

GYA HA HA HA HA!

THERE'S NO WAY WE'D FIND A CLUE ABOUT THE CHASSEURS IN A PLACE THAT'S OPEN TO THE PUBLIC LIKE THAT.

JUST LET IT GO, DANTE.

AAAAAARGH, DAMMIT!!

WHERE THE HELL IS THAT CLOAKED BASTARD FROM YESTERDAY!?

LIKE HELL IT IS!! UNEXPECTED CLUES!! TURN UP IN PLACES LIKE THAT!! RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE!!

DANTE MAY NOT LOOK IT, BUT HE DOESN'T LIKE THE DARK OR SCARY THINGS. I THINK HE WAS PROBABLY TRYING TO ACCUSTOM HIMSELF TO THE FEAR IN A PLACE THAT WAS LESS THREATENING FIRST.

AH.

SO THAT'S HOW IT IS.

WHY WOULD YOU GO STRAIGHT TO THE TOURIST AREA?

ACTUALLY... IF YOU WANT TO SEARCH THE TUNNELS, IT WOULD BE FASTER TO MAKE CONTACT WITH A CATAPHILE.

U-FU- FU-FU- FU!

WHAT'S THIS, HMM? WORRIED ABOUT VANITAS, ARE WE?

.....

BALDY- BALDY- BALDY

MOROW! MOROW! MOOOOROW!!

...I'M CURIOUS ABOUT WHY THAT MIGHT BE.

HMM?

?

YES. HE'S ACTING PERFECTLY NORMAL.

AND SO...

IN THAT CASE ...

...WAS THAT EXPRESSION, A LITTLE WHILE AGO?

...WHAT ON EARTH...

SUU
(ZZZ)

CHI
CHI

KATSU

KI
(CREAK)

キィ

PATAN (SHUT)

!!?

A LITTLE LONGER AND I WOULD HAVE FINISHED THIS ENTIRE BOOK.

YOU CERTAINLY TOOK YOUR TIME.

KATSU

I TOOK A GOOD, SOLID NAP!

NOBODY CARES!!

TSUYA

TSUYA

WHA...

OH.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING, BUT DON'T WORRY.

DON'T FOLLOW ME!

DO YOU THINK THE CULPRITS REALLY ARE THE CHASSEURS?

IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

ARE YOU GOING TO INVESTIGATE SOMETHING RELATED TO THE DISAP-PEARANCES?

I'M *GOING WITH* YOU.

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF *FOLLOWING* YOU.

TA GUPP

ハァ

I WILL, THANKS.

YES.

. DO AS YOU LIKE.

HAA

.....

NOTRE-DAME CATHEDRAL?

ZA (SHUF)

! THIS IS...

KACHA (RATTLE)
KACHA
HUH?
WAIT... VANITAS!
NOÉ. THIS WAY.
WHOA
... PERFECT TIMING.
NII (GRIIN)
HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE !?
GACHA (CLICK)
!
... OKAY!
KYU! (CINCH)

NOW THAT WE'RE DISGUISED FOR INFILTRATION, LET'S GO!

HMM.

I KNOW IT WAS HERE... SOME-WHERE

ゴト GOTO (CLUNK)

カチ KACHI (CLICK)

...WHERE DOES THIS HOLE LEAD US TO?

THE CATA-COMBS.

THERE ARE ENTRANCES TO THE UNDERGROUND LABYRINTH ALL OVER PARIS...

...BUT THE CATACOMBS WE'RE HEADED FOR ARE MADE SO THAT ONLY THOSE IN THE KNOW CAN REACH THEM.

THESE AREN'T LIKE THE PLACE WE VISITED THIS AFTERNOON.

GOTON (CLUNK)

ゴトン

THAT'S WHERE THE CHASSEURS LIVE.

THEN...

YOU WALK WITHOUT HESITATION.

JUST AS IF YOU'D BEEN HERE BEFORE...

...WHY...

... DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THEM?

VANITAS!

YOU ALREADY KNOW, DON'T YOU?

TELL ME.

WHO ARE THEY?

THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE TAKING VAMPIRES ONE AFTER ANOTHER ...

NOÉ, LISTEN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE CHASSEURS.

...ALTHOUGH, TO BE ACCURATE, THEY AREN'T CHASSEURS.

...YOU'LL DIE.

IF YOU THINK OF THEM AS HUMAN AND UNDER-ESTIMATE THEM...

IF WE ENCOUNTER THE CHASSEURS AND IT TURNS INTO A FIGHT...

...THE FIRST THING THEY'LL DO IS TRY TO PUT OUT YOUR "EYES."

KATSU

!!

...NO.

THIS IS...

THIS DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THE OTHER CATACOMBS.

DID THESE BONES BELONG TO PEOPLE WHO WERE SPECIAL SOMEHOW?

WHOA ...

ALL THE BONES HERE BELONGED TO VAMPIRES!

THE FACT THAT VESTIGES OF THE "REWRITING" STILL REMAIN, EVEN AFTER DEATH, PROVES THAT IT WAS A HIGH-RANKING VAMPIRE.

LOOK THERE. SEE?

THAT SKULL STILL HAS ITS FANGS.

THE NAMES CARVED ABOVE THEM BELONG TO THE WARRIORS.

THIS ROOM DISPLAYS THE BONES OF THE VAMPIRES OUR PREDECESSORS KILLED IN THE UNDERGROUND LABYRINTH.

THEY COMPETED WITH EACH OTHER, USING THE NUMBER OF VAMPIRE HEADS EACH TOOK TO SEE WHO WAS STRONGER!

HMM? ME??

AND, UM...YOU ARE...?

MY NAME IS LAURENT FORTIS.

I AM THE SIXTH PALADIN, HONORED WITH JASPER, THE GREEN GEM!

A PALADIN... ONE OF THE TWELVE CAPTAINS WHO LEAD THE CHASSEURS!

...!!

!

I SEE ...

I WAS JUST TAKING A WALK, PATROLLING WHILE I WAS AT IT, TO GET THE MAP FIRMLY INTO MY HEAD!

I WAS POSTED TO THIS DISTRICT RECENTLY TOO.

THEY HAVEN'T BEEN CALLING ME "CAPTAIN" FOR LONG.

AH, STOP. YOU'LL MAKE ME BLUSH.

WHO ARE YOU TWO?

AND?

WE...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, AT THIS HOUR?

YOUR JOBS ARE ABOVEGROUND, NOT DOWN HERE.

HUH? YOU'RE LOST?

I'M VINCENT, AND HE'S GILBERT.

IN THE CHURCH, WE DISCOVERED A SECRET PASSAGEWAY THAT LED UNDERGROUND, AND IT WASN'T IN THE RECORDS. WE SHOULD HAVE REPORTED IT TO THE CHASSEURS IMMEDIATELY, BUT WE FOOLISHLY WENT DOWN OURSELVES, JUST TO SEE, AND WE'VE BEEN WANDERING AROUND LOST LIKE THIS FOR SEVERAL HOURS...

HM?

WE'RE TERRIBLY SORRY, SIR!!

THAT MAKES THREE OF US, THEN!

HA HA HA HA HA!!

I COULDN'T FIND MY WAY BACK, AND I WAS IN A BIT OF A BIND!

YES, THAT'S RIGHT!

YOU WERE LOST?

UM. MASTER LAURENT, YOU'RE...

...HUH?

AFTER ALL, BECAUSE I LOST MY WAY, I MANAGED TO FIND YOU TWO!

IT MUST ALL HAVE BEEN DIVINE GUIDANCE, THOUGH.

IS THERE ANY WAY TO SHUT THAT MAN UP?

NOÉ. IF THEY TAKE US BACK TO THE CHASSEURS' GUARDROOM LIKE THIS, WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE.

YES, SIR ...

HAVE NO FEAR. MY TRUSTY SUBORDINATES ARE BOUND TO BE SEARCHING FOR ME!

COME, THEN, FOLLOW ME!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!

!

I CAN'T FIND A SINGLE VULNERA-BILITY.

...NO.

A ROOM THIS SPACIOUS... UNDER-GROUND?

WHAT'S THIS?

KATSU (TAK)

HUH?

LETTERS ?

THE LETTERS WRITTEN ON THAT WALL...

VINCENT, VINCENT!

COULD YOU COME HERE A MOMENT?

GLII (YANK)

!

...NOW, THEN.

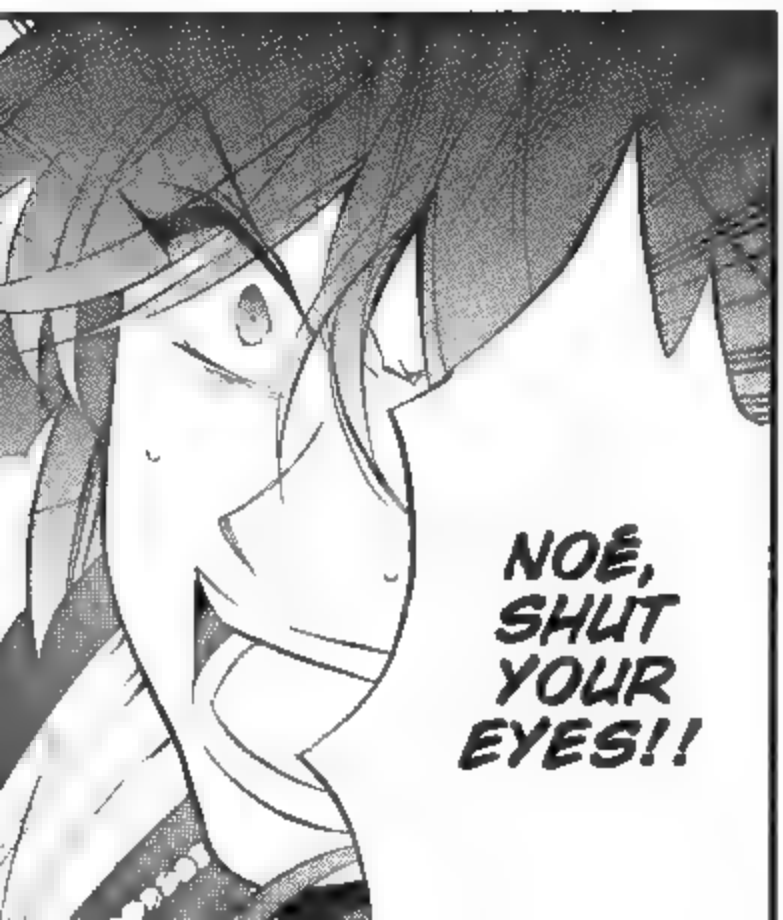
GASHAN (CRASH)

NO!—

GARA

GARA (RATTLE)

HYU
(WHIRR)


NOÉ, SHUT YOUR EYES!!

HUH ...?

A STUN GRENADE !?

KA (FLASH)

GHK ...

...AH. I THOUGHT SO.

GUNYA (WARP)

WHAT'S THIS...?

MY VISION...

...IS...

PUKI (CATCH)

...!?

DO (THUD)

DOES IT HURT?

THAT LIGHT HAS THE POWER TO RENDER YOUR KIND'S "EYES" USELESS.

THIS ONE'S A VAMPIRE, HMM?

...ARE BLURRING TOGETHER!

UGHK...

THE REAL WORLD...

...AND THE WORLD OF FORMULAS...

PACHI (SPARK)

PACHI

HFF.

NOÉ!

KOFF, KOFF.

HNN...

DID YOU KILL THEM?

THE ONES YOU STOLE THEM FROM ...

THOSE CLOTHES AREN'T YOURS.

HFF...

HFF...

... N...

...

NO...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANTED HERE...

...BUT NO VAMPIRE THAT ENTERS THIS PLACE ...

...IS EVER ALLOWED TO LEAVE IT ALIVE.

—WE ARE CHASSEURS.

THE INDE-STRUCTIBLE BLADES THAT HUNT THE CRIMSON-EYED HERETICS...

...WHO WARP THE PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD GOD HAS CREATED!

LET IT BE SO!

TO BE CONTINUED...

The Case Study of Vanitas
Chapter 14

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